

IN SHELL BATTERED CHATEAU-THIERRY

Chateau-Thierry was by no means obliterated either by the battle which ended the Germans there in the first week of June or by the one which drove them from its gates the third week in July. No building in the town, on either side of the Marne, is without some scar of the bombardment or the occupation, but the damage done to many a house was done within its four walls, and the plasterers, paperers, glaziers and cabinet-makers, will work wonders of restoration up and down its battered streets.

The town was systematically pillaged, and if more was not stolen, it was because the Boches had to leave so suddenly that they did not have time to take their plunder with them. The church was piled high with goods gathered in the ransacked town, done up into bundles and addressed by this soldier or that to his folks back in the Fatherland. The stolen goods included everything imaginable from the robes of a priest to the copper faucet of a water-pipe.

The unforgivable thing was the abundant evidence of malicious vandalism, mirrors smashed, paintings slashed, and again a painting would be found with a neat, rectangular hole cut out of it, the deliberate malice of an invader who wanted it known he had been deliberately malicious. It is known. And will be remembered.

Curiously enough, a restraining hand kept the vandal from the home of La Fontaine, Jean de la Fontaine, France's beloved poet and master of fables, was born in Chateau-Thierry and dwelt there in the days of his maturity. Pretty much as it looked in the 17th century with its high, outside stairs and its old-fashioned well, it stands now, and American soldiers passing by note that no shell happened to strike its white walls. Inside, the paintings and sculptures are unharmed. The deep cellars served as dug-outs for German officers, judging from the elegance of the bed-linen and comfortable blankets left behind. An American sergeant, surveying the dugout, found and confiscated for his own use some precious German papers left behind in the hurried flight. It was some of Herr Oberst's toilet paper.

Now and for many a day to come there will be great how-wow in the corners as the returning citizens listen to the tales told by the 200 who stayed—old folks for the most part who managed somehow to live through the one and fifty days of the occupation. How they crept into the gardens at night to look for food, how they lived on the one or two cows killed by shellfire and on the bread the baker baked through the hole in the first American wounded soldier back of the German lines and wept because he was so young, how they thrilled at the tidings that the battle tide had turned and that the invaders were being driven from their gates—this is the tale of the 200.

The sight of sights in the scarred city is the bridge, the famous triple-arched bridge of stone which spans or used to span the Marne and link together the two parts of the city. It was dynamited during the first battle that swept the streets of Chateau-Thierry in June, the smashing of the bridge halting the rush of the enemy reinforcements and the loss of the town was averted. The bridge was blown up, its falling masonry left a rough path across the river, and by use of ladders, by climbing, sliding, jumping, dropping, the Yanks still employ the old bridge as their footway across the Marne.

Even the most battered house can serve as a billet, and history must record how one detachment of Yanks passing on their way through Chateau-Thierry spent the night sleeping securely in a great deserted house with many beds in it. They did not know till afterwards that they had put up at a brothel.

The ruins of the old chateau which gave the town its name are not much the worse for the latest battle to beat against the chateau-walls. It was built in the eighteenth century, and little is left of it save a part of the ancient walls, a part of a watch-tower, and moss-grown entrances to its dungeons. Once again these dungeons served as refuges for troops for any shell to reach once again the town watch-towers served defenders, machine gun shot spitting through the narrow apertures where long ago the arrows sped. Half-wrecked machine gun emplacements held off positions within the chateau grounds held until the enemy had engulfed the city; here and there a half-burned wall, here and there a soldier's rifle, his rusted rifle lying on its side, his wound decoration fastened to the cross, the tale of his death scrawled in German.

PHATIGUE-SQUAD PHILOSOPHY

I care not who writes the songs of an Army so long as I can write its guard rosters.

Compensation: The French soldier may not get paid as much as the American, but he has a lot less trouble with the language of the country.

Never was it said more truly than of the old union-bugle mules: "They are doing their bit."

Lots of guys write home that they are making rapid progress in French when the truth is that the only words they are really sure of are *oui*, *non*, and *biere*.

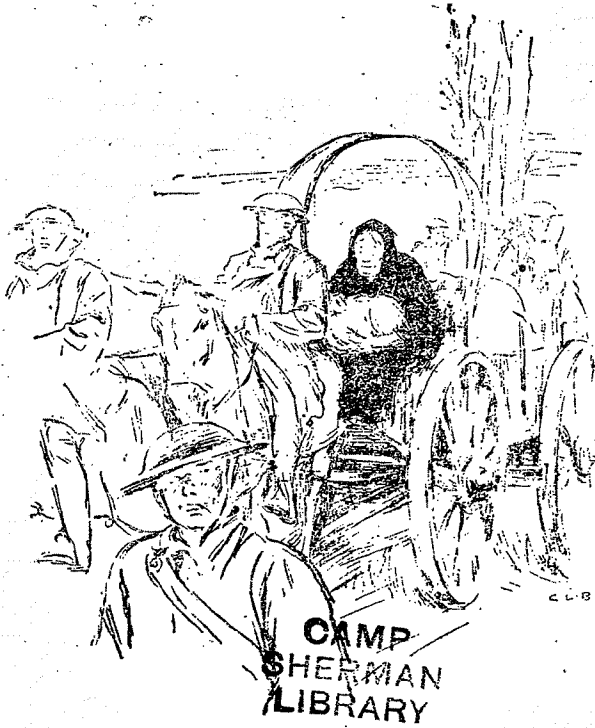
In France, if you announce yourself as a journalist, they think you are a big guy. If you called yourself that in the U.S.A., they'd call you a big stiff.

If a Jock, after five minutes' conversation with you, doesn't lift his knees to show you where he was layoneted the first time, then you haven't made a bit with him.

All the world is peculiar except America; and even some Americans are a little peculiar.

It's not that the Irish don't want to fight; it's simply that they're so anxious to fight they don't know where to begin.

HER COACH OF HONOR



HENRY'S PAL TO HENRY

PROVING THAT A MULE SKINNER'S LIFE IS NOT EXACTLY A FLOWERY BED OF EASE

France, July 13th, 1918.

Dear Henry: Well Henry you ain't got nothing on me much. I'm at the front, ossie. Of course I ain't quite as near as you are maybe but I'm so close it ain't very healthy to go out promoting in no quiet country lane with a madamelle on your arm like I used to do down in the S.O.S.

Well they was a lot of mules coming up here from down in the S.O.S. town where I wrote to you from and it seems that they needed some mule skinner's right quick to take them up. One morning the C.O. come over to our company and wants to know if there's any mule skinner in the doughboys that wants to go to the front.

Now Henry, what I don't know about mules would fill a fair sized encyclopedia. I never even hooked one up before, but it's almost like hooking up a tame horse and I would of done anything Henry to get to the front. So I stepped out of line and pulled my hat over on one side and kind of spit sideways to give the old bird a good impression of the real thing he wanted most right then.

Well Henry I got to come alright. We left the S.O.S. about ten days ago and we just pulled in. All we had to do on the way up was to carry water for them pesky rabbits. I can guess how you Henry, that a mule can drink twice as much water as a elephant any old day.

But the worst part of it now that I'm up here is that I'm still a noncombatant and am still a doughboy too. I enlisted to fight Henry and about the first time I got a chance I'm going right up in the front line through with the doughboys and take a crack at a Hun.

Good luck old Pal.

S. T. B.

France, July 16th, 1918.

Friend Henry: Well Henry I hooked up old Hardboiled and Jennett this a.m.—then's the 2 mules I drew out of the lot Henry—and it was just like pie. The boys all say old Hardboiled has a bad grin and might be bad if he wanted to but if he is never let at us Henry, that a mule can drink twice as much water as a elephant any old day.

The only time he picked up his ears was when the guns started shooting. I guess they must be something doing up on the front from the way it sounds.

Anyway Henry I guess I can get away with this mule skinner's job like it was nothing. The only thing I don't like is that I have to be a noncombatant all the time and can't fight like I want to. But it's a whole lot better than being back in the S.O.S. at that Henry.

So long Henry.

S. T. B.

P.S. Before I turn this over to the censor I'll tell you some more about old Hardboiled. I went out this a.m. to where I got him anchored down to a captured German cannon and what do you think he pulled off Henry? He laid his old grizzled nose on my shoulder just as though he was a kitten. I ain't no more afraid of him now than I am a cat.

You can say what you please Henry but it takes gentleness to get a animal's goat. Treat a mule right and he'll treat you right Henry. I could handle any kind of a mule the army has got on its books and get away with it because I got a neck of handling them with kindness.

Well Henry there goes mess call. I missed some calls in this Army all right but that's one call I don't miss only here it ought to be called stew call because stew is what we got.

S. T. B.

France, July 19th, 1918.

Hollo Henry: Well Henry I guess you are in the big fight and are still alive. If you are you'll get this letter alright. That rampus the other day was the beginning of the big fracas sure enough.

But I guess the Germans are kind of sorry they started it Henry. I'm about 5 kilometers nearer Germany than I was and from the looks of things Henry I'll be about 10 more by morning on acct. of keeping the supplies up to the boys.

But I got a lot of things to tell about Henry. I always maintained being kind to animals was alright and I still do, but that old Hardboiled sure did fool me Henry. He wasn't no common mule, though. He was a Boetie jackass if there ever was one. He's clean across the Rhine and in Germany by this time if he didn't meet a 2 ton shell on the road somewhere.

Here's what happened Henry. Yesterday morning they told me I could hook up and take the chow up to the boys. So I got about 5 p.m. I started out with the chow and 2 K.P.s.

Well to make the story short Henry we got up to where we could see the smoke quite a ways off and stopped as the K.P. said he would find a M.P. to show us the way through. Pretty soon Henry a little shell about the size of a barracks bag came along and hit about 50 ft. behind us and Bingo! We was off to the races Henry. I kept pulling on the springs and hollering at old Hardboiled

GERMAN-BORN SARGE WINS COMMISSION

But First He's Got to Go Home and Get Citizenship Papers

Perhaps there are a dozen A.E.F. men in the know on this, and perhaps a couple of companies. That doesn't matter so much, but when they get back to the line—after a brief session with the pictures at the Louvre, the beauties of the season and loveliness of earth, etc.—they're going to be long on pity for Fritz. Just because they'll be short a sergeant. The sergeant, you must know, is not a prisoner, nor yet has he been adopted by the publicity experts as an exhibit of Yank ferocity untamed. But he's not hanging out in France for awhile, anyway.

You've got it—he's going to ally foot sweet foot. All because he's shown up so well against the Hun that he's going to be commissioned. But first he has to go home and get his citizenship papers.

Didn't Like Germany

Ten years ago he lived in Germany, but he and his father and lots of others didn't like it, so they came to a good good country. Make believe his name is Bierstube—for truly it's just such a name as that. For the last nine months, along with a lot of other Americans who can't see this Kultur stuff for snar apples, he's been naturally taking out his spite on his one-time neighbors and friends of yesterday.

You look at the sergeant and you like his fighting face. His eyes are keen and clear and set at a universal angle, for quick sighting. The boys of the infantry say he has a persuasive way with a rifle and a technique with the cold steel that turns the nerves of his ex-countrymen to frozen kraut, their spines to limp strings of Lieberwurst.

When he takes a platoon over No Man's Land, sometimes the gang will stop for all of a half second to wonder what Germany ever did to him to make him love the Potsdamers as roughly as all that.

Even to the Haircut

The funniest part about it is that he's built on squarehead lines. Hudenburg pompador and all, and he prattles as easily of raiding parties and encircling movements as he does of the fat little pigs he helped his men round up beyond Chateau-Thierry, when the grub wasn't coming up worth a hoop in Halifax.

Der All Highest, who vass hading soch a fine dime sidlink op on der tower bei Rheims vaiding for dings to habben—and didn't dey habben. Vilhelm?—der All Highest got to vank avile yet ill Sergeant,—grasse us—Shervat! Bierstube gets pook on der chob. Of course, things have been beastly quiet on the Crown Prince's sector, and will those considerable German generals please wait a little while until the Yank comes back with his papers and the God-bless-yon's of the old folks fresh in memory once more?

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